

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the November 3, 2020 Election

The November 3, 2020 election is very important. Everyone is encouraged to vote and vote early. The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers may be helpful as we think about voting.

1. Q: When is the voter registration deadline?

A: The deadline to register to vote is October 9, 2020, whether you plan to vote by mail or on Election Day. *If you miss the October 9 deadline, you can still register in person (and then vote) at a polling place during early voting, which is from October 15-31.*

2. Q: How do I register to vote?

A: You can get a voter registration form from your local county board of elections office or from the N.C. State Board of Elections website, fill it out and mail it in. Or, for the first time, you can register to vote on-line. More information can be found at www.ncsbe.gov/Voters/Registering-to-Vote.

3. Q: What is absentee voting by mail?

A: North Carolina voters who don't want to go to the polls to vote in person can vote by absentee voting by mail. **ANYONE WHO WANTS TO VOTE BY MAIL CAN DO SO. YOU DON'T NEED AN EXCUSE OR REASON TO GET AN ABSENTEE BALLOT. ABSENTEE VOTING OR VOTING BY MAIL IS OPEN TO EVERYONE.**

4. Q: What are the three key steps to voting by mail in North Carolina?

A: First, voters must request a mail-in ballot. Second, after the ballot arrives, the voter must fill it out in front of at least one witness. Third, the ballot must be returned on time for it be counted.

5. Q: How do I get a mail-in ballot?

A: You must fill out an absentee or mail-in ballot request form, send it in, and wait for your ballot. Request forms can be found online at www.ncsbe.gov/Voting-Options or you can go in person to your local county board of elections office and pick up a request form. You can also ask the county board of elections to mail you a request form. The request form has instructions on how to send it back using mail, email, fax or in-person delivery. Starting in late August, the state board of elections' website at www.ncsbe.gov will also have a portal where people can request absentee ballots and track them.

6. Q: How long will it take to get a mail-in ballot?

A: The state will start sending out absentee or mail-in ballots on September 4. If you request a mail-in ballot before Sept. 4, you should get it in early September. Election officials say that after Sept. 4, if you send in your request form and a week later still haven't gotten your ballot, contact your county elections board to make sure there are no issues.

7. Q: What's the deadline for asking for a mail-in ballot?

A: You can request an absentee or mail-in ballot at any time from now until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 27, 2020. You can mail, fax, email, or hand deliver the request form to the county board of elections. If you mail it, make sure to do so before the October 27 deadline. **The request form must be delivered to the board of elections before October 27.**

8. Q: Can I ask for absentee ballots for my friends and family?

A: Not for your friends, but you can request an absentee or mail-in ballot form for most family members. State law says that for someone to help fill out or send in an absentee ballot request form for someone else, they have to be a member of an official "multipartisan assistance team" or the voter's legal guardian or near or close relative. A near or close relative is a voter's: spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, stepparent, stepchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law or son-in-law.

9. Q: How do I make sure that my mail-in vote gets counted?

A: Follow all the rules regarding mail-in ballots. The rules are on the ballot itself, but the key rule is that you must have one eligible witness. The witness shouldn't see who you vote for but needs to see that you filled out the ballot.

10. Q: Can the State reject my mail-in ballot? Do I get a second chance if it's rejected?

A: It's possible that officials might not accept your mail-in ballot if you don't do it correctly. Maybe you don't sign the ballot, or it arrives in the wrong envelope. A recent court case says the state must give voters "due process" to fix problems with their mail-in ballot. **However, not all problems will be fixable, so it's important to carefully follow the rules to make sure that your vote gets counted.**

11. Q: What is the deadline to return my absentee or mail-in ballot?

A: Any ballot post-marked on or before Election Day, November 3, AND gets delivered no later than three days after the election will be counted.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO VOTE BY MAIL, PLEASE MAIL YOUR BALLOT EARLY. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO MAIL YOUR MAIL-IN BALLOT. OR BETTER YET, SEE Q&A Number 12 below.

12. Q: Can I hand-deliver my ballot to the county board of elections instead of mailing it?

A: Yes. You can deliver your mail-in ballot to the county board of elections before 5:00 p.m. on Election Day. The mail-in ballot must be delivered by either the voter or a close relative, and sealed in the proper envelope, to combat potential fraud.

**** Also, you can deliver the mail-in ballot to an early voting site during early voting.

13. Q: What if I request an absentee or mail-in ballot but later change my mind and want to vote in person?

A: If you receive a mail-in ballot, you don't have to use. You can vote in person, as long as you don't fill out the mail-in ballot and send it to the county board of elections. To vote in person and by mail-in ballot could be considered a crime as you can't vote twice in the Nov. 3 election. Again, as long as you don't mail in the completed ballot, you can always change your mind and vote in person.

14. Q: Is a photo ID required to vote?

A: No. You don't need a photo ID to vote either in person or by mail.

Sources: (1) Newspaper article, "Anyone who wants to vote by mail can; here's how" by Will Doran in the August 9, 2020 *News and Observer*

(2) Absentee Voting in North Carolina, published by the North Carolina State Board of Elections